
From: chief@windsorpolice.ca
Sent: 2/9/2022 10:57:08 PM
Subject: Update on Ambassador Bridge Demonstration

Dear Members,

I would like to provide an update on the situation at the Ambassador Bridge. As you are aware protestors, are occupying Huron Church Road between Tecumseh and College Ave. Officers are working hard day and night to disrupt or prevent situations that could potentially threaten the safety of our community.

To effectively control a situation that appears to have potential of being protracted, we are making a request to the federal and provincial government for more officers. This request is to ensure that we have enough personnel by volume to address the situation at the Ambassador Bridge while sustaining continuity of operations throughout the City. Additionally, we want to ensure WPS members are able to perform their duties safely and effectively. Time off for rest and recovery is important for member health and wellness, and lessons learned in Ottawa with the "Freedom Convoy" protest (going into its 12th day) have shown that it is necessary to be prepared for the future and arrange the call for resources now. It should be noted that due to the severity of the protest in Ottawa, all police resources in Ontario have been strained.

I attended the protest location this morning and was proud, but not surprised, by the actions of the officers who were responding to the situation. Your patience, professionalism and composure are helping to maintain a safe and peaceful environment for all. To those who are sustaining our day-to-day operations, I also appreciate your contributions to keeping our communities safe. The commitment and dedication of the members of this service continually goes beyond what is expected.

As the situation continues to unfold, I will attempt to provide timely updates. Today the Mayor and I held a media conference with regards to the ongoing situation. My speaking notes are below and will provide you with an update on the situation.

Sincerely,
Chief Pamela Mizuno

I am here this afternoon to provide an update on the most recent situation from Huron Church Road. As of this morning, there were approximately 50 to 75 vehicles in the area and approximately 100 protesters. The situation is very fluid and we are continually assessing. Northbound traffic on Huron Church from Tecumseh Road West is blocked off; police control this intersection and are not allowing any traffic flow at this time. The Ambassador Bridge can be accessed from Wyandotte Street. Southbound traffic into Canada is shut down and this includes the exit from the Bridge and access south of College Ave. We have one lane open southbound on Huron Church for Emergency Vehicle access. Demonstrators are not interfering with traffic travelling East or West on College Ave or Tecumseh Road and are cooperating at this time to allow emergency response capabilities for the City of Windsor. To reiterate, east and westbound traffic on College Avenue and Tecumseh Road is open for vehicular traffic.

I cannot comment on specifics in regards to our operational plan, but I can tell you that our goal is to open all lanes of traffic on Huron Church Road. In order to do that, we are taking a diplomatic approach and attempting to negotiate a safe and sustainable resolution. I realize this is an emotional for many and urge everyone involved not to jeopardize public peace or participate in purposefully illegal events. To those engaged in the protest, we implore you to continue to speak with our officers on the ground. Impromptu road closures and walking demonstrations by the protesting groups will hinder emergency response and will jeopardize those who need assistance. It is essential we have first responder access to the west end.

I have heard from many business owners and citizens and I too share your concerns. Understand that the Windsor Police respects the right of Canadians to exercise their freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. However, I can assure you that the Windsor Police Service will not tolerate illegal or disorderly behavior and we will investigate any criminal acts in accordance with legislated responsibilities. Our officers will resort to the level of intervention necessary to ensure the safety of the public and to maintain peace, order and public security. The proper use of police discretion is a valid and appropriate approach to deescalating situations, this should not be confused with a lack of enforcement.

Throughout the pandemic our officers have exercised this discretion when dealing with other unlawful activity relating to government mandates. In those instances, officers identified responsible parties at the scene and enforced the law by arresting or ticketing offenders when a lower risk opportunity presented itself.

Before I conclude, I would like to take a moment to thank the members of the Windsor Police Service for their professionalism, patience and dedication to duty. As we move into a third day of protests, I am aware of the potential impact that a prolonged event may have on the wellbeing of our members.

I am appreciative of the ongoing support that we have received from the community and for their patience during this challenging time. I echo his Worship's sentiment that no one agency can resolve this situation alone. Today I will be forwarding a request to both Provincial and Federal officials looking to attain additional resources in the form of personnel, equipment and funding. We rely on all levels of government to assist in resolving these protests peacefully and restoring calm to our City.

Sincerely,
Chief Pamela Mizuno